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ABSTRACT

Changes in kindergarten education in the United States from its inception to the present and reasons for the historical changes are explored. Froebel's approach to kindergarten education is described and the introduction of kindergarten programs in the United States by various sponsors such as the Women's Temperance Union, churches, and settlement houses is depicted. Programmatic change from Froebel's theologically oriented rationale to the concepts and practices of progressive education to the prescriptive kindergarten programs of the present as well as changes in the number of children attending kindergarten are delineated. Subsequently, continuities and discontinuities in curriculum development are identified and changes in developmental theories used to justify early childhood education are pointed out. Concluding sections discuss pressures for early instruction in academic skills, the increased use of standardized tests to assess kindergarten achievement, and the presently inadequate preparation of kindergarten teachers. Suggestions are made for influencing future directions of kindergarten education. (Author/RH)

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The Kindergarten: A Retrospective and Contemporary View

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About one hundred and twenty-five years have passed since the kindergarten was introduced into the United States. During this time there has been slow but growing acceptance of kindergarten education in America, as well as of early childhood education in general. There have also been a number of changes in conceptions of kindergarten education.

The first kindergartens were based upon the philosophy and pedagogy of Friedrich Froebel. Good kindergartens of that era reflected both the spirit and the letter of Froebel's writing. The first major change from that early conception modified kindergarten practice to make it more consistent with principles derived from progressive education and from the emerging field of child development. During this time kindergartens slowly became integrated into the American public school system. More recently conceptions of kindergarten education seem to be evolving again. With the almost universal acceptance of kindergarten education as a legitimate part of public schooling, the distinction between the kindergarten and the primary grades seems to be disappearing in American schools. This chapter will explore these changes and some of the reasons underlying them.

Froebelian Kindergartens

The kindergarten was designed by Friedrich Froebel as a child-centered educational institution for young children, although Froebel's

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concept of early education and child-centeredness was quite different from conceptions that exist today. Froebel viewed education as a supporter of development and as resulting from self-activity. Froebel developed a kindergarten theory that unified man, God and nature, and presented this unity to young children through a series of symbolic materials and activities. Each child constructed his conception of unity as a result of his own active involvement in the kindergarten. (Lilley, 1967).

Central also was the conception of man as Gliedganzes, a word coined by Froebel himself. "The word Gliedganzes means a member of a whole who is potentially commensurate with the whole to which as member he belongs, but who can make his potentiality actual only in and through active membership" (Blow, 1913, p. 9). The concept of Gleidganzes contains three distinct implications. "The first is that which is generic or the reproducers of the species in lower forms of life, becomes Ego in man. The second implication is that this generic Ego or universal self is not only the ideal Human, but the divine. . . . The third and final implication is that this immanent-transcendent God is one with the absolute first principle through which is given its being" (Blow, 1913, p. 10).

The major vehicles of Froebel's curriculum were the gifts, sets of manipulative materials to be used in prescribed ways demonstrated by the kindergarten teacher, and the occupations, a series of craft activities, as follows:

GIFTS

Solids

First gift: Six colored worsted balls about one inch and a half in diameter

Second gift: Wooden ball, cylinder, cube, one inch and a half in diameter

Third gift: Eight one inch cubes--forming a two-inch cube

Fourth gift: Eight brick shaped blocks, 2" x 1" x ½"

Fifth gift: 27 one-inch cubes, three bisected, three quadrisected diagonally forming a three inch cube

Sixth gift: 27 brick-shaped blocks, three bisected longitudinally, six bisected transversely

Surfaces

Seventh gift: Squares--entire and bisected

Equilateral triangles--entire, half, thirds

Lines

Eighth gift: Straight--splints of various lengths

Circular--metal or paper rings

Points

Ninth gift: Beans, lentils, seeds, pebbles

Reconstruction

Tenth gift: Softened peas or wax pellets and sharpened sticks or straw. To reconstruct the surface and solid synthetically from the point.

OCCUPATIONS

Solids

Plastic clay, cardboard work, woodcarving

Surfaces

Paper folding, paper cutting, parquetry, painting

Lines

Interlacing, intertwining, weaving, embroidery, drawing

Points

Stringing beads, perforating (Froebel, 1887)

The sphere, represented in the balls of the first gift, has but a single external surface; thus Froebel uses it in symbolizing unity. A ball appears again in the second gift along with a cube, a six-sided solid representing diversity. A cylinder also included, with attributes of both the sphere and the cube, represents the mediation of opposites. The ideals of Froebelian kindergarten education were presented to children in these gifts. Songs, games, movement activities, stories, poetry, nature study and gardening rounded out the curriculum.

The introduction of the kindergarten into the United States has been rightly attributed to Margarethe Schurz, who established the first such program in Watertown, Wisconsin in 1856. Her major contribution, however, may have been in introducing the idea of the kindergarten to Elizabeth Peabody, rather than in operating a children's program for a short period of time. Elizabeth Peabody became a tireless advocate of kindergarten education who not only established the first English-speaking kindergarten in Boston, but who also travelled extensively throughout the United States carrying the message of kindergarten education wherever she was invited and helping individuals and groups establish kindergartens (Snyder, 1972).

The first public school kindergarten was established in St. Louis in 1873, taught by Susan Blow. It was a long time, however, before kindergartens were to receive widespread approval within the public schools. Conflict existed between the educational philosophy undergirding elementary education and that undergirding the kindergarten. The problems of articulation between the two types of school programs required a solution before the two systems could operate comfortably side by side. Benjamin C. Gregory wrote in the seventh yearbook of the National Society for the Scientific Study of Education (1908):

> In passing from the kindergarten to the primary school, there is a break. Do what you will to soften the change, to modify the break, it still remains a break. Three general methods of dealing with the difficulty have been employed: (1) To provide a connecting class to take the child out of his kindergarten habits and introduce him to those of the primary school: in the words of some teachers, "to make him over." (2) To modify the kindergarten and made it more nearly resemble the primary schools. (3) To modify the primary school to make it more nearly resemble the kindergarten. To these might be added a fourth: To do a little bit of each. (p. 22)

Nina Vanderwalker, (1907) writing just a year earlier, suggested that the introduction of kindergartens into the elementary school had already influenced the primary curriculum in numerous ways. Art, music, nature study and games had been introduced into the grades as a result of this contact. There is probably no doubt that the process of curriculum diffusion that operated went both ways, with elements of the primary curriculum also introduced into the kindergarten.

Kindergartens were not found in public schools alone. Many of the kindergartens of that era were a part of private schools, in some cases German-language schools developed to serve the German-speaking communities where the acceptance of kindergarten carried over from abroad. Many English language schools also adopted kindergartens as well.

Kindergartens were also used to serve other than secular educational purposes. A number of churches considered the kindergarten as a valuable means for carrying on religious work and incorporated kindergartens into their activities. In addition, church missionaries used kindergartens

to reach socially isolated minority groups in America, as well as foreign groups abroad. Kindergartens were established by American missionaries in many less developed countries.

Kindergartens were also sponsored by the Women's Christian Temperence Union to provide aid to families plagued by problems of alcoholism. They were also incorporated into many of the early settlement houses established in slum areas to provide social services to poor and immigrant families in a number of American cities. Labor unions and private businesses also sponsored kindergartens during this era.

This variety of sponsors probably aided the development of kindergartens in America, but it also caused confusion between the idea of the kindergarten, an educational institution, and the creche or day nursery which served a child caring function. Another problem stemming from the many uses was the lowering of standards of quality. While many kindergarten sponsors maintained programs of high quality, others stretched their resources to serve as many children as possible and to provide that service as a labor of love. Training was often inadequate for those serving in kindergartens as were the physical and monetary resources available (Vandewalker, 1908).

In addition, as the nature of kindergarten practice became diversified, practices in these kindergartens often reflected the purposes of the sponsors. Church related kindergartens introduced the teaching of religious precepts in their kindergarten programs while settlement house kindergartens were more concerned with meeting broad social needs. The confusion between education and philanthropy was evident (Spodek, in press).

The Kindergarten and Progressivism

In the early years of kindergarten development in the United States, good practice was determined by its adherence to Froebel's writings. Soon gifted kindergarten practitioners began to modify their classroom activities, revising and transforming Froebel's prescriptions. Paper dolls were added to the beds constructed from the blocks in Froebel's gifts along with sand tables, doll-houses and other materials that promoted free social interaction among kindergarten children (Weber, 1969). Prior to the end of the nineteenth century, the evolving field of child study came to the attention of kindergarteners, through the writing and lectures of scholars such as G. Stanley Hall. In addition, a new view of education was evolving that was to address issues related to the education of younger as well as older children.

The child study movement evolved in the United States under the leadership of G. Stanley Hall. Hall's method of studying children was to observe them directly, analyze their products and query those who worked in close contact with children through interviews and questionnaires. This was a major change from the traditional use of introspective recall to study childhood. Hall suggested that education be consistent with the content of children's minds rather than reflecting adult thought. Hall believed that the emotional rather than the intellectual life of the young child was of greatest value and that free play could serve the developmental needs of young children. He criticized Froebelian kindergarten theory as being superficial and fantastic. He felt that young children needed large bold movements rather than the sedentary activities of the gifts and occupations.

John Dewey, whose ideas provided one of the important bases for progressive education, also suggested a form of education for young children that was quite different from the ideas of Froebel. In establishing a sub-primary class in the University of Chicago Laboratory School, Dewey called for educational activities that would support continuity in children's growth and would be connected to their everyday lives. The child's life in the home and the community was to be the basis for school activities rather than a set of abstract ideals symbolized in manipulative materials (Weber, 1969).

Both Dewey and Hall lauded the Froebelian kindergarten. Dewey admired the fact that Froebel had rooted the education of children in their activities, his valuing of social learning, and his belief that children gained knowledge through productive and creative activities. Hall credited Froebel with developing a form of education based on children's play and with pointing to recapitulation theory as the basis for understanding the development of children (Ross, 1976). Thus, for many kindergarten educators, the introduction of educational ideas into the kindergarten from such scholars as these was seen as an extension of Froebelian ideals rather than as a rejection of them.

During the early years of the twentieth century, the number of kindergarten educators attracted to these newer ideas about early childhood education continued to increase. Some suggested a break from traditional kindergarten education and the development of kindergarten curriculum that was responsive to the nature and the life of the child; others suggested a reconciliation of newer ideas about children's learning and development with traditional Froebelian ideals. The International Kindergarten Union, representing kindergarten educators of the time, established

a committee to study these conflicting educational ideologies and to devise a set of recommendations for some clear policy on kindergarten education. Rather than author a single report, this Committee of Nineteen issued a book containing three separate ones. The first report was a statement of Froebelian philosophy and an endorsement of traditional kindergarten practices written by Susan Blow and endorsed by a number of committee members. The second report was a statement of progressive kindergarten principles and practices reflecting the philosophy of John Dewey written by Patty Smith Hill and endorsed by other committee members. The third report, written by Elizabeth Harrison presented a compromise position, and recommended a reconciliation of the other two opposite positions (Committee of Nineteen, 1913).

Kindergarten practice in the United States went through a complete reconstruction during the first third of the twentieth century. Froebelian principles in a general sense remained, along with vestiges of Froebelian practices, such as Circle Time and the use of finger plays. But kindergartens became more reflective of children's lives at home and in the community and their methods reflected the knowledge that was being generated about how children learn and develop. By the 1930's the transformation was virtually complete.

In their description of the Horace Mann Kindergarten, a demonstration kindergarten at Teachers College, Columbia University, Garrison, Sheehy and Dalgleish (1937) describe an exemplary program for five-year-olds. This program was viewed as a model of what kindergarten education ought to be. The teachers were seen as being responsible for creating an environment filled with worthwhile activities and for developing a growing classroom organization rooted in the experience and needs of the children.

Experiences were organized around the social sciences, the natural and physical sciences, the creative arts, and the tool subjects of reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic. Materials for physical play, manipulative play, dramatic play, art and woodworking were provided. The large Patty Hill blocks and the smaller Pratt unit blocks found in this kindergarten were a far cry from the one inch cube blocks of the Froebelian Gifts.

The general plan of this program was a flexible one, building on a: well as creating interests in children. The social science program was designed to clarify children's social experiences and provide for their adjustment to social life. Work in the natural and physical sciences was designed to give children an opportunity to observe, experience and experiment with phenomenon, to gain scientific information and to enjoy nature. The creative arts helped children develop skills and enjoy and appreciate art experiences utilizing a range of media including language. The academic skill areas were presented only in informal ways.

It is difficult to determine to what extent the kindergartens of that era reflected the exemplary practices of the progressives. There are few descriptive studies of practice in that period and, where studies do exist, they are of idealized rather than representative programs. The pattern of the Horace Mann Kindergarten, however, is reflected in early childhood textbooks published during that era (e.g., Foster & Headley, 1948; Gans, Almy & Stendler, 1952). In addition, reform kindergarten practices were suggested as being just as appropriate for the primary grades:

> A modern progressive primary grade room does not look unlike a kindergarten room. . . . The same informal organization is carried on with the children gradually assuming more and more responsibility for the conduct of the room. Children are

given the opportunity to carry out their own aims and purposes and to judge their results. . . . As in the kindergarten, the children move freely, work individually or in small self-organized groups. . . . The subject matter of the first grade is related to and grows out of the activities. . . . While acquiring information and developing skills are not overlooked, the emphasis is on social living and the development of character (Whipple, 1929, pp. 260-261).

Contemporary Kindergarten Practices

During the past decade or so we have seen another major shift in kindergarten practices. The concern for development in young children and for the creation of programs reflecting their needs and interests seems to be lessening. In its place can be found a concern for the achievement of specific learning goals. It seems as if the kindergarten is again being reconstituted, this time essentially as an extension downward of primary education. Thus the change is from a concern for with continuity of development to a concern for continuity of achievement.

A number of strategies have been used to reconstitute the kindergarten to make it more responsive to primary education. One is to adopt prescribed commercially prepared educational programs, often extensions of textbook series in academic areas. Such adoptions, it is suggested, insures the continuity of learning through the elementary school.

Prescriptive programs have also been suggested and adopted that have been designed to provide children with the prerequisites for success in later school learning. Many of these are based upon "nationally validated" early childhood curricula that were originally created for handicapped or potentially handicapped young children (Fallon, 1973). In many

cases the activities prescribed are tied to a screening or evaluation instrument, so that success or failure on a specific test item determines the child's sequence of learning activities. In both cases, once programs are selected, teachers function less as decision-makers and more as technicians implementing predetermined activities.

A number of influences seem to have led to this present situation. Among those the following:

1. Kindergarten attendance has become the rule rather than the exception.
2. There have been major shifts in the orientations of early childhood curriculum.
3. There have been parallel shifts in developmental theories used to justify early childhood curriculum.
4. There has been a societal press to offer academic instruction at an early age.
5. There has been an increase in the use of standardized achievement tests in evaluating the educational progress of young children.
6. Many kindergarten teachers are inadequately prepared to be effective early childhood curriculum makers.

Kindergarten the Rule Rather than the Exception

Kindergartens were first introduced into the public schools in 1873. Kindergarten children represented only slightly over one percent of the elementary school student population (k-8) at the turn of the century and of these 42% attended private schools. It was estimated that in 1922, only about 12% of the five-year-olds attended kindergartens. Even by 1964 less than half of the five year olds attended kindergartens while in 1978 this percentage exceeded 80%. Table I summarized kindergarten attendance in the United States in the decades since the turn of the century, identifies the proportion of those in attendance in public and private institutions,

and compares kindergarten attendance to total elementary school attendance during this period. Since some five-year-olds are enrolled in first grade, the actual percentage of attendance in kindergarten is somewhat less than this chart would suggest. It seems to have become stabilized at slightly over 82% in 1977 and 1978 (Grant & Eiden, 1980).

Insert Table 1 here

Only in recent years could elementary program designers expect that children entering the primary grades would have been in kindergarten. Once kindergarten attendance became the norm, it received much more the attention from those who develop elementary programs and educational materials. Kindergarten education then became the expected beginning point for children in schools and thus a focus for building educational continuity into school programs.

Shift in Orientation of Early Childhood Curriculum.

During the past one hundred and forty-five years that kindergartens have been in existence they have been used to achieve a range of different goals, including teaching philosophical idealism, Americanizing children, building proper habits, providing emotional prophylaxis for children, serving as a vestibule for the primary grades, presenting the content of school subjects to young children and helping to develop learning-to-learn skills (Spodek, 1973). This period of curriculum development can be characterized by both its continuities and discontinuities. The continuities can be seen in the persistent concern for two types of goals for young children: the support or stimulation of growth or development, and the achieving of specific learnings (Spodek, 1976). The concern for growth

could be found in the original Froebelian kindergarten. This same concern was articulated in a different way in the progressive kindergarten as well as in the development of nursery education.

The articulation of the reform kindergarten with the progressive primary school was supported by a mutual concern for the growth of the child. The idea of "development as the aim of education" (Kohlberg and Mayer, 1972), a basic progressive education concept, provided the connection between early childhood educators and developmental psychologists. "Growth" or "development", used in a metaphorical sense by progressive educators, seemed to take on a literal meaning in early childhood education. As the progressive education movement wained, there was a lessening of concern for development and an increase in the concern for achieving specific learning outcomes. This concern for learning was imposed upon the kindergarten as well, with the kindergarten conceived of as preparing children for the learning they will achieve in later school years. Gans, Almy and Stendler (1952) characterized this "readiness" view of the kindergarten as the 3Rs Curriculum some thirty years ago:

> The 3Rs approach has not only prevailed in the primary grades, but it has reached down into the five-year-old kindergarten. Counting, some writing and reading readiness activities chiefly in the form of workbook exercises have been typical experiences in kindergarten where this curriculum has been in operation. Under such a setup the kindergarten is seen as a year of settling down for children, of adjusting to sitting still and following directions, so that they will be better prepared for a more rigorous attack on the 3Rs during first grade (p. 80-81).

The difference between the concerns of kindergartens of thirty years ago and those of today is with the intensity of academic instruction in the kindergarten. Instead of being concerned with using the kindergarten year to get children prepared for the organization of the primary grades, both the organization and the content of these grades seem to have been introduced into the kindergarten.

Shifting Developmental Theories Justifying Early Childhood Curriculum.

The advent of the Headstart program has been characterized as resulting from the joining of new views of human development with new concerns for social justice. At the time that educators seemed to be increasing their concerns for the problems of educating disadvantaged children, ~~while~~ new ideas relating to cognitive development, and especially to the importance of the early years on this development, seemed to be coming to the fore. The work of Jean Piaget, which had been accumulating for decades, began to receive the attention of American psychologists and educators. Piaget's theories described children's cognitive development as moving through a series of stages with achievement at later stages dependent upon successful progress through earlier stages. The early experience of the child were seen as having significant impact on the total intellectual development, even though direct instruction was not viewed as effective in moving children through these stages. Hunt, in his classic formulation, Intelligence and Experience (1961) brought together a wealth of theory and research from many sources that supported the idea that these early experiences could have a major impact on the developing intellect. Bloom's (1964) analysis of test data on intelligence suggested that a great deal of the variance in later tests of intelligence could be accounted for by the variance in tests taken by children before five years of age. Thus, it

was demonstrated that what children learn early in life could impact on their continued learning.

In addition to this, behavioral psychologists were demonstrating that by manipulating the motivational sets of children, and by analyzing complex tasks into simpler components to be taught separately and later integrated, many specific skills could be learned by children at an early age. Behavioral principles were used to understand development and to provide the basis for systematic programs to teach young children. (Bijou & Baer, 1961)

While each of the developmental theories briefly described above are different from one another, and none of the theories directly translates into to kindergarten program, they have all been used to support the notion that intellectual development begins early in life and that what one learns in the early childhood years can have serious consequences for later learning. Growing out of the empirical research and the theory generation that took place in child development during this period, a number of educational programs were created for young children at the kindergarten and prekindergarten level. Some of these were designed for poor children, such as those of the Planned Variations of Headstart and Follow-Through.

While the evidence accumulated that there was much that young children could learn prior to first grade, there has been no unanimity on the issue of what young children ought to learn during that period--what priorities ought to be given to the different learnings that are possible--and what the long term consequences of particular learnings are. As kindergartens moved under the influences of the elementary school, it was felt in many cases that those learnings most consistent with what is

learned later in school, or which seemed to be preparatory to later school learning, ought to be supported in the kindergarten. Yet there is no evidence that there are greater long term payoffs for these kinds of learning activities than for activities more consistent with the growth ideology of the progressive kindergarten.

The Press for Early Instruction in Academic Skills

The introduction of reading and writing into the kindergarten is certainly not a new phenomenon. An exhibit at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition labeled "The American Kindergarten" was criticized for encouraging such activities as reading and writing. This intrusion of academics into the Froebelian kindergarten was defending by citing a need to "Americanize the kindergarten idea" (Ross, 1976). Formal reading instruction was never considered a part of the Froebelian kindergarten nor did the progressive kindergarten offer more than informal activities related to basic academic skills.

There have been a number of pressures that have led to the increased concern for teaching academic skills in the kindergarten. On the one hand, there seemed always to have been parents who wished their children to be involved in academic instruction as early as possible. Montessori preschool programs have been attractive to these parents because of the promise offered that these children will learn the three R's significantly earlier than they have traditionally beeen taught. Books have been similarly available detailing instructions for parent to engage in activities with their young children that promise to give these children superior minds, or at least early access to school learning. These parents may strive to enroll their children early in school and/or influence the school to make academics available to their children at the earliest possible

moment. Many of these parents have gifted children, or at least view their children as gifted. Wagner (1977) describes the way one exemplary kindergarten teacher dealt with parental pressure to teach academics in kindergarten.

A greater pressure to offer early instruction in academic skills, however, has resulted from the concern that the public schools may not be adequately preparing all children in the area of basic academic skills. The perceived failure of the public school system to provide adequate basic skills instruction has led to a number of suggested solutions, including the use of minimum competency tests and offering instruction in the academic skills at the earliest possible moment. The logic of this latter position seems inviolate. When the teaching of academic skills has begun in grade one, there have been failures. Some of these failures could be overcome by providing additional instructional time. This additional time can be provided by beginning instruction one year sooner than had been the case, thus providing this time well before the initial assessment of success.

There are a number of concerns that might be raised with this approach. To add instructional time for academic skills within the kindergarten requires that the time be taken from some other activities, activities which are also educational. Thus, there are no absolute gains in learning, but rather trade-offs; at best achievement is gained in one area at the expense of achievement in other areas. With the addition of instruction in academics in the kindergarten, the losses have been in terms of those activities that traditionally have been highly prized: art, music, science (nature study) as well as opportunities for expression and play. These were the activities for which kindergartens were applauded for having introduced into the elementary school in years past.

While articles on kindergarten cooking (Placek, 1976), block building (Liedke, 1975), art (Warfield, 1973), environmental values (Bryant & Hungerford, 1977) and science (David, 1977) can still be found in the professional literature, often the justification for their inclusion activities in the kindergarten is related to the academic outcomes that can be derived. The use of blocks, for example, is advocated for teaching mathematical concepts of grouping, comparing, one-to-one correspondence, and ordering as well as numbers and number names (Liedke, 1975). Thus the academic values ~~ultimately~~ are used to justify the inclusion of these program activities. In addition, one can question what actually is taught in kindergartens in relation to academics. Durkin (1978) has criticized current kindergarten reading practices as sometimes being offered prematurely to children, and, when offered, the programs may themselves be poor.

In moving academics downwards into the kindergarten, too often the focus has been on mechanics. While these are not the most critical aspects of academic learning, they are the ones that are assessed most often by standardized tests.

The Increased Use of Standardized Tests to Assess School Achievement

Directly related to the concern for instruction in the basic skills has been the call for the increased use of standardized achievement tests to periodically and regularly assess the achievement of these skills in children. While in the past educators often advocated postponing administering standardized achievement tests, these are now being administered to children at earlier and earlier ages. These tests also influence what is taught.

A number of states have developed their own testing programs, while others have used commercially available standardized tests. Brictson and

Roeber (1978) describe the development of a state kindergarten assessment program in Michigan. Teachers were able to use the formal instruments developed by the state education agency, other standardized tests, or other informal assessment techniques in their pilot program. Interestingly, most assessment was done in the area of cognitive and psychomotor skills, areas most easily assessed using the state developed instruments. When the areas of music and art were assessed, it was most often done through teacher observation.

An example of the relationship of testing to the teaching of basic skills can be found in a National Conference on Achievement Testing and Basic Skills called by the National Institute for Education of the Department of Health Education and Welfare in March of 1978. The call at that conference, by educators and politicals alike, was for the improvement of instruction in basic academic skills and, beginning early, for the regular and continued administration of standardized achievement tests as a way of improving instruction in basic academic skills.

Since the content of most standardized achievement tests in the early grades is on the mechanics of reading, language and arithmetic, and since programs at these grades are to be assessed by children's achievement on these tests, then the focus on instruction has more often leaned towards teaching letter-sound associations, computation skills, spelling, punctuation and the like, rather than higher order academic processes such as comprehension, problem solving, and the application of principles to real problems.

One of the issues raised in the recent evaluation of the program models in Follow Through was that the instruments used to evaluate achievement were more appropriate for some areas than for others. Since

most tests used focused on achievement in the mechanics of reading language and arithmetics, those models that emphasized instruction in reading, language and arithmetic were strongly favored in the evaluation (House, Glass, McLean & Walker, 1977). As program elements that are evaluated tend to receive greater attention by school personnel, especially when schools are being criticized, program goals such as social competence, for which there are no adequate standardized measures, tend to have lower priorities.

The view that standardized tests are best for evaluating kindergarten programs becomes an issue in that academic goals alone rather than a broad range of educational/developmental goals become the basis for judging the program. Kindergarten programs can become totally academically oriented with only those goals that can be assessed through standardized achievement tests becoming the basis for the program. Lesiak and Wait (1974) describe how a traditional kindergarten program was modified into a "diagnostically oriented" program through the intervention of school psychologists. Prescriptive activities were provided to children in three program domains based upon a profile developed for each child using objective assessment techniques (tests).

Hutchins (1981) found that the adoption of a preschool screening program contributed to the valuing of the more measurable educational objectives and the use of more direct instructional methods in a kindergarten. In addition, the pace, sequence and quantity of learning offered each child was often governed by the screening test and the program itself was legitimated in the community in relation to that test. Thus, a cyclical pattern was established whereby a set of tests determined a child's educational experiences and also legitimated those experiences.

The Inadequate Preparation of Kindergarten Teachers

Within the early childhood tradition, the teacher is seen as the individual responsible for the development and modification of the curriculum. Teachers must know a great deal in order to create and choose appropriate educational activities for young children. This knowledge is provided in programs of teacher preparation and is attested to by state teacher certification. The area of teacher preparation and certification in early childhood education has recently been surveyed (Spodek & Saracho, in press). Generally programs require that teachers have knowledge of principles of learning and of child growth and development, as well as of foundation and general education. Most important is the knowledge of curriculum and teaching methods appropriate to the age level of the children to be taught. Opportunities to practice this knowledge is provided in practicum situations.

The last survey of teacher certification programs related to early childhood education in the United States indicated that even though kindergarten teachers may have completed teacher education programs and be certified, they might not necessarily know a great deal about early childhood education. Of the 44 states responding to a survey and requiring that kindergarten teachers be certified, 35 required them to be certified in elementary education. In only eight of these was a kindergarten or early childhood endorsement available. Thus, in the majority of states, anyone prepared to be an elementary school teacher has been considered competent to teach kindergarten (Education Commission of the States, 1975). A recent study of college programs preparing early childhood teachers revealed that a majority of students in most of the programs take a double major and/or prepare for dual certification. The other certificate in most instances was in elementary teaching (Spodek and Davis, 1981).

In some states, kindergarten teachers are certified in early childhood education. In other cases they receive a kindergarten endorsement on an elementary certificate. In still other cases (Illinois, for example), an elementary teaching certificate is all that is required for teaching in the kindergarten as well as in the elementary grades. Thus, while some teachers may have been provided with an indepth program in early childhood education, others will have a course or two in addition to their elementary curriculum and methods courses, and many will have no preparation specifically related to teaching kindergarten. Yet all will be considered to be prepared to teach kindergarten.

Given this range of preparation for teaching kindergarten, it is reasonable to assume that many teachers responsible for making educational decisions in the kindergarten will not have been adequately prepared to make those decisions. These teachers will have knowledge of elementary education methods and curriculum, but not necessarily of early childhood methods and curriculum. It would be reasonable to expect those teachers to view the moving down of elementary programs into the kindergarten as appropriate.

Even those teachers prepared in an early childhood tradition may not be adequately prepared to cope with program decisions in the kindergarten. The child development point of view in that tradition more often than not reflects a "growth" mentality and avoids a concern for achievement. This orientation may be inadequate for assimilating the demands of teaching academic subjects. Teachers trained in this tradition might only have their own experience in elementary school to rely on as the basis for decisions about academics and thus may be ignorant of developmentally appropriate methods of approaching this area.

Conclusions

The field of early childhood education has changed dramatically during the past two decades. Much of the change is related to increases in the field: greater numbers of children served, more programs in existence, and more practitioners employed. Much of the focus of the field has related to changes at the prekindergarten level--the development of Headstart and other similar federally funded educational programs, increases in the number of children in day care centers as well as changes in the sponsorship of these centers, and the availability of programs for preschool handicapped children. Such changes reflect new federal policies that have channelled increasing amounts of federal money into the field. These policies, however, have impacted on the kindergarten as well, even though kindergartens are primarily supported by state and local funds. They have had a spillover effect leading to increased acceptance for kindergartens (Tanner, 1973).

Because kindergartens are within the state's domain, they have been shaped by different influences than prekindergarten programs. Political influences at the state level have led to the dramatic increases in the availability of kindergartens and the parallel increases in kindergarten attendance already described. Prior early childhood initiatives served to provide a base for kindergarten initiatives. In addition, state budget surpluses and new federal revenue sharing funds in the 1970's allowed state legislatures to establish such new services as public school kindergartens (Forgeine, 1975).

In any one community a number of influences may be impacting on decisions about what to offer children in the kindergarten including the six discussed here. With the demands for teaching academic skills early,

with greater reliance on standardized tests for assessing instruction, and with the unsureness that kindergarten teachers might feel about the nature of the programs they have been offering, decisions are often delegated to others. Packaged programs coupled with assessment procedures or integrated into a total textbook adoption packages may be difficult to resist. The process of program development at the school level may be giving way in many communities to more general district wide program adoptions. The idea of tailoring programs to meet individual children's needs and interests may be giving way to providing programs that will lead children to score well on tests or fit more comfortably with later instructional offerings.

Sadly, early childhood educators have had relatively little impact on recent early childhood policies. Consensus does not exist within the field as to the value of different kinds of programs or even as to the value of any early childhood programs. Research that is available is equivocal and tends to be used by policy makers to support predetermined positions (Forgeine, 1975).

Most often the policy concerns of early childhood educators has been to increase the availability of early childhood programs for children. Perhaps it is time now to look beyond the quantitative aspect of early childhood education at its qualitative aspects. As things now stand most children will attend kindergarten at age five. But what kind of kindergarten will it be? Will the program be broadly developmental? Will it be designed to achieve objectively measurable academic outcomes? Will teachers be adequately prepared to provide appropriate educational experiences for young children? Will the program reflect a commitment to developmental as well as academic continuity?

As we attempt to influence the directions that kindergartens take, we need to develop an understanding of the factors that have shaped and continued to shape kindergarten practices, including influences within individual teachers, within the profession, within school systems and within communities. We need also to learn how to use that knowledge to influence practice. This might require that we become politically as well as pedagogically astute.

Table I

Elementary School and Kindergarten Enrollment: United States, 1899-1900 to fall 1978

Level	1899-1900	1909-10	1919-20	1929-30	1939-40	1949-50	1959-60	Fall 1969	Fall 1978
Kindergarten-grade 8	16,261,846	18,528,535	20,963,722	23,739,840	21,127,021	22,207,241	32,412,266	37,011,390	32,242,000
Kindergarten	225,394	346,189	510,949	786,463	660,909	1,175,312	2,293,492	2,821,213	2,861,000
Public	131,657	293,970	481,266	723,443	594,647	1,034,203	1,922,712	2,601,242	2,642,000
Nonpublic	93,737	52,219	29,683	54,456	57,341	133,000	354,000	200,000	200,000
Percent of five-year-olds enrolled in public school	58%	85%	94%	91%	90%	88%	84%	92%	92%
Percent of elementary children enrolled in kindergarten	1.3%	1.8%	2.4%	3.3%	3.1%	5.2%	7.0%	7.6%	8.9%

Source: Grant, W.V. & Eiden, L.J. Digest of educational statistics 1980, Washington, D.C.: National Center for Educational Statistics, 1980.

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